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### **Saint Thomas Aquinas Primary Source Analysis**

One of the most well known documents of the theologian Saint Thomas Aquinas was the *Summa Theologica* which was an extensive piece of work that targeted many of the conservative views of the church. He provided his point of view on those beliefs. The *Summa Theologica* has many small sections which are topics that he went over and then there were questions that many people in society during his time wanted answers to. But what he did differently was he gave answers and was not concerned about pleasing the conservative church. Aquinas would give his view on the topic and then have evidence that would directly go against the conservative claims. He marked the beginning of a combination of Theology and Religion. Aquinas wrote the *Summa Theologica* as a way to show that the conservatives did not have as much power as they claimed. He gave the people an alternative option to follow.

The main question Aquinas put forth was whether the human soul in the present state of life can understand immaterial substances in themselves? During this time it was thought God was such a high entity that nobody could possibly know he really looked like because nobody was pure enough to truly know. The conservative church was basically saying that by nature man is never would never be able to understand God, so people should just accept that fact that he exists and let nature take its course, : “ ‘nature would be frustrated in its end” were we unable to understand abstract substances, "because it would have made what in itself is naturally

intelligible not to be understood at all." But in nature nothing is idle or purposeless. Therefore immaterial substances can be understood by us" (Summa Theologica pg. 88).

Aquinas basically was refuting that by accepting nature and not investigating, it was missing out on learning so many things the universe has to offer and was just a way for the Church to control people.

Later in the text, he went against the statement of man not being able to understand nature Aquinas stated that : "For since the nature of our intellect is to abstract the quiddity of material things from matter, anything material residing in that abstracted quiddity can again be made subject to abstraction; and as the process of abstraction cannot go on forever, it must arrive at length at some immaterial quiddity, absolutely without matter; and this would be the understanding of immaterial substance.." (Summa Theologica pg.89). He said that our intellect itself was an abstract concept but when a person dies, abstraction will end and that was when a person will truly have the capability of understanding these immaterial substances or God himself.

In conclusion, Saint Thomas Aquinas' life was full of hardships in the beginning when he was trying to go against the conservative church and stand up for what he believed. When he wrote the *Summa Theologica* it led to so many people to start questioning what exactly they were being taught.

## Works Cited

Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologica*. Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. Benziger Bros. ed. Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1947.

<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/aquinas/summa.html> (accessed December 1, 2016)